Collaborating for Completion

Tom Christopher, President, Follett Higher Education Group
Our Mission
The mission of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation is to secure the financial resources to support the values, vision and priorities of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Case for Support
The Phi Theta Kappa Foundation provides the resources for unique and innovative programs that encourage, engage and motivate individuals to complete their degrees, fulfill their dreams and become leaders in our society.

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Phi Theta Kappa is recognized as the official honor society for community colleges by the American Association of Community Colleges. Membership is based on superior academic achievement and is conferred only by invitation of your local chapter. To learn more, attend an informational meeting on your campus, contact your chapter advisor, or visit us online at www.ptk.org.
It Takes a Village

“Ora na azu nwa” is a proverb from the Nigerian Igbo culture that translates into “It takes a village to raise a child.” A similar phrase, “Nwa oru,” means “child of the village” or “child of the community.”

When Hillary Clinton published her bestselling book, It Takes a Village, in 1996 it was controversial. Some criticized Clinton’s assertion that community plays a role in the lives of children—a role they felt should be solely filled by God and family. Simultaneously those working in the fields of child welfare welcomed the book’s thesis, that everyone—educators, healthcare providers, volunteers, neighbors and businesses—all have the opportunity to contribute to the welfare of children in addition to their families. Yet, when we look beyond the disagreements, it is a concept worthy of further reflection, especially as it applies to today’s college students.

Phi Theta Kappa started a journey back in 2010, taking on the challenge of community college completion with the establishment of the Community College Completion Corps (C4). Yet, it is a road that we have not traveled alone—in fact, we have found many valued partners along the way.

Our partners include fellow educational organizations like the American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Community College Trustees, the League for Innovation and the Center for Community College Student Engagement. Pearson, an educational resource company, is now providing a sponsorship of our C4 toolkits, which help chapters and regions plan completion events.

Businesses and foundations have also placed a winning bet on our students through their support of scholarships. Among others, they include the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation and the Coca-Cola Foundation, providing scholarships for Leaders of Promise, New Century Scholars and the Coca-Cola Community College Academic Team. Through their sponsorship of the All-USA Community College Academic Team, Follett Higher Education Group offers scholarships to the student scholars and book scholarships for the colleges they represent. METI/CAE Healthcare gives scholarships for our students in the medical field, and now the International Public Safety Leadership and Ethics Institute (IPSLEI) has partnered with Phi Theta Kappa to create a scholarship for our members majoring in public safety.

Generous individuals have also seen the potential of our student scholars and been moved by their perseverance. Among those are Ray Hites and the Hites Family Community College Scholarship Foundation; the late Jack Guistwhite and his wife, Margaret; and Lou and Rosemary Oberndorf.

In every issue of Visionary magazine, we recognize all of our donors. Regardless of the size of gifts, contributions pooled together for a common cause have made a great impact. Our collaborations make us better as individuals and organizations.

You will also have the opportunity to meet some of the many faces behind college completion—our corporate partners, foundations, individual donors, students, faculty and administrators. Our students have taken the mission of completion seriously—pledging to help at least one other student complete—through mentoring, tutoring, whatever it takes. Each one, help one.

If we were on a ship together and saw someone fall overboard, we would not stop to argue the course of action. We would immediately toss out a life preserver. That is, in essence, what we are doing when we educate, mentor, support and provide financial assistance for students in need. We save them from a life of dead-end jobs, meager earnings, low job security and little chance of getting ahead. With an education they will become productive, successful, engaged citizens. What we are doing when we educate, the example of earning a college degree and a legacy of continued success that can be passed on for generations to come.

So for all of those students who aspire to earn a college credential as a means to a more fulfilling and prosperous life for themselves and their loved ones, but are struggling to complete, we encourage you to keep moving forward—as we walk with you. We commit to support you. We pledge to push, pull and prod—failure to complete is not an option.

Statistics show that individuals with college degrees will earn an average of $500,000 more throughout the course of their careers than their peers without degrees. They are less likely to be the victims of lay-offs and less likely to fail into poverty. They are more likely to have health insurance, and their children are more likely to attend college.

More than 150,000 students have signed the pledge to complete; and countless faculty, staff and administrators have pledged their commitment to help students complete also. In addition to news coverage in local media, the college completion movement has also been featured in The Chronicle of Higher Education, The New York Times, USA TODAY, Community College Week, Inside Higher Ed and Community College Times among others. Through the media, the importance of completion is being shared globally.

All those who have joined in this cause are fighting for our students. They realize that, in the end, all community college students, regardless of their age, are “children of the community,” and if they fail, we fail as a society.

While many may argue about the role of government in individual success, those who support college completion understand the role of the community. They see the relevance of a 4th Century Chinese proverb—that if we teach men and women to fish, they will have food for a lifetime. That’s what college completion does.

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Tom Christopher and Steve Pribyl followed very different paths in their professional lives, but today work together as successful executives in the same company. Both are quick to acknowledge that community colleges helped put them on their pathway to success. Their experience as students, and later in the business world, made them appreciate the role of community colleges in educating tomorrow’s business leaders. They also recognized that community colleges are uniquely positioned to serve all students, including those needing a second chance at education, or those with limited financial resources.

Through their company, Follett Higher Education Group, Christopher and Pribyl have helped forge one of the most vital collaborations supporting student success and college completion: the partnership between Follett Higher Education Group and Phi Theta Kappa, which makes the All-USA Community College Academic Team possible.
American Sales and Operations, say that community colleges helped them lay the foundations for their business careers, and they’re committed to giving back. They want deserving students to enjoy the same opportunities they had — and Follett is making that happen.

Follett Higher Education Group has partnered with Phi Theta Kappa for the last three years, giving $125,000 annually, mainly in support of the All-USA Community College Academic Team program.

Follett’s participation supports tuition scholarships for each team member and book scholarships for the team members’ colleges. After partnering with the American Association of Community Colleges for many years, Christopher and Pribyl credit Dr. E. Ann McGee, President of Seminole State College of Florida and a Phi Theta Kappa Foundation Trustee, with connecting them with Phi Theta Kappa.

“For Follett, it allows us to give back to students in a very tangible way. There are so many heroic stories of triumph behind the Phi Theta Kappa award winners that it is impossible to not be moved.”

— Steve Pribyl, Executive Vice President of North American Sales, Follett Higher Education Group

Following graduation at CCAC, Christopher went to Kent State in Kent, Ohio, where he received his B.B.A. in Economics. He entered the retail business at Pier 1 Imports, where he worked for 19 years and was eventually charged with growing the business. He ended his time there as Executive Vice President of Operations.

Christopher then became CEO of BookStop, a discount bookstore in Austin, Texas, which was sold to Barnes & Noble. He became President of Barnes & Noble Retail Division, helping to develop the “superstore” concept and growing sales from $150 million to $700 million.

He then moved to a start-up company, Restoration Hardware. As President and Chief Operating Officer, he grew the company from five stores with annual revenue of $4 million to 107 stores with annual revenue of $370 million.

For me personally, I would not be where I am today without my community college, and Follett’s partnership with Phi Theta Kappa is a great blessing.”

Christopher achieved earlier success with three names very familiar in the business world: Pier 1 Imports, Barnes & Noble and Restoration Hardware. He gives the credit to his education at Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for putting him on the path to the success he has achieved today.

“It really changed my life in a very positive way,” Christopher said of his time at CCAC. “I was at a point in my life that was sort of difficult, and I was able to get totally refocused and re-energized about getting through school and setting goals for myself and achieving them.”

Christopher grew up just outside Pittsburgh. He started out at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia but left to take some time off after a difficult freshman year. This was in 1966, when CCAC was newly established. Encouraged by his mother, he applied for admission to the new college.

“My successful experience at Prairie State laid the foundation for my entire career,” he said. “I found being a student at the college was invigorating, and the faculty and staff were committed to much more than just a job; they were committed to changing lives.”

At the time, Pribyl was working at nearby Governors State University’s campus bookstore in shipping and receiving. In 1979, the university selected Follett to be its bookstore provider, and Pribyl assumed the lead management role, kicking off a lifelong career with Follett.

He has worked his way up through the company to his current position, which makes him responsible for all retail and wholesale sales and operations throughout North America.

“Students need to truly embrace community colleges because the value they bring is unparalleled,” Pribyl said. “It can take them anywhere, like mine did. I would put my first two years of community college up against an education from any four-year school. The foundation for everything I’ve done came from a community college.”

Christopher continues to stay involved with CCAC, serving as the national chairman for the college’s fundraising campaign, “Imagine and Achieve,” and setting up a scholarship foundation.

His commitment to community colleges has grown even stronger since joining Follett. Just as CCAC reconnected him with a drive for success, both Follett and Phi Theta Kappa have reconnected him with community colleges and their students.

“It’s an opportunity for us to give back to these institutions; and personally, I believe community colleges are fundamentally important to this country,” Christopher said. “These schools help hold communities together in so many ways. They give students a shot in life that they might not otherwise be able to afford.”

Your support of Phi Theta Kappa scholarships provides deserving students with financial resources that enable them to complete their associate and baccalaureate degree studies. The Oberndorf Lifeline to Completion Scholarship assists students facing unanticipated barriers to completion. Please consider a gift to the Oberndorf Lifeline to Completion Scholarship Endowment by visiting ptkfoundation.org or contacting Dr. Nancy L. Rieves, CEO of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation, at 800.946.9995, Ext. 3537, or email nancy.riebes@ptk.org for information.
Ann and Doug Foard are natural collaborators who complement each other — and bring a joie de vivre to everything they undertake. They share many reasons for supporting Phi Theta Kappa’s college completion initiative. Both have years of teaching experience, and both have worked closely with Phi Theta Kappa’s agendas for student success — Ann as a longtime, award-winning chapter advisor and Faculty Scholar; Doug as a partner in many joint ventures, as Secretary of Phi Beta Kappa and a trustee of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation. Both have served on the Honors Program Committee. They also credit Phi Theta Kappa for bringing them together. They met in 1994 at an Honors Institute and married in 2004.

“I was first attracted to Phi Theta Kappa because of their outstanding programs that fostered student success,” Doug said. “That remains the attraction today.

“I believed firmly, and continue to believe, in what Phi Theta Kappa is doing at community colleges. Community colleges are essential to American higher education and especially the college completion agenda. That’s why it’s so important to support the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation — the funds raised by the Foundation are supporting the programs that give students an exceptional experience in community colleges and provide scholarships for transition into senior colleges.”

“Just an invitation to membership can be transformational,” Ann said. “Seeing that transformation motivated me to be very involved as an advisor. Community colleges deal with many students who were not in the mainstream, who have not thought of themselves as excellent students. Phi Theta Kappa gives many students the validation they have never had before.”

Both Foards value the college completion agenda. “Again, community colleges have taken the lead in a cause vital to the economic and educational future, not just in the United States, but worldwide,” Doug said.

Ann became advisor of the Mu Eta Chapter at Broome Community College in New York in 1990. Her leadership created a highly engaged chapter. “When we got off our campus and saw what was going on in the New York Region and internationally, I was blown away,” Ann said. “I saw the powerful impact Phi Theta Kappa made on the students.”

With support from the college faculty and administrators, Ann and her chapter were successful in incorporating the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Study Topic into many classes across the curriculum. Her chapter also performed valuable campus and community service and was recognized with regional and international awards. Chapter members were named to the All-USA Community College Academic Team.

As Secretary of Phi Beta Kappa, the prestigious senior college honor society that served as the model for Phi Theta Kappa, Doug fostered collaboration between the organizations. In 1994 he invited Phi Beta Kappa’s Dr. Rod Risley to speak at Phi Beta Kappa’s Triennial Convention, the first-ever community college leader to be given this opportunity. Doug addressed the Phi Theta Kappa Convention the following year and was named an International Honorary Member. He moderated many Convention debates and has spoken at two Honors Institutes.

The Foards’ collaboration extends into other areas of higher education. Ann, who holds degrees from SUNY Oswego and SUNY Cortland, has retired but assists Doug in preparing presentations for his adult education classes at George Mason University, near their home in Loudon County, Virginia. Doug describes these classes as “every teacher’s dream. The students come to class solely for the sake of learning.” Doug serves on the board of Randolph Macon College, his alma mater. He received his master’s degree from the University of Virginia and his Ph.D. from Washington University.

The Foards travel frequently and, fulfilling requests of students, have led several European tours. Ever the historian, Doug is planning to develop a paper on the Spanish-American War into a book.

Ann keeps in contact with advisors she met through Phi Theta Kappa — many now retired — who became dear friends. Both Ann and Doug are quick to praise advisors for their contributions to Phi Theta Kappa’s efforts toward student success. As Doug said, “A bonus Phi Theta Kappa gave me was not only meeting Ann but meeting and coming to know her advisor friends. To say community college faculty are exceptional is an understatement, and the advisors are even more special. The faculty who give up their own time to promote Phi Theta Kappa and what membership can mean to students are dedicated educators, and what better calling can there be?”

An Honors Program Endowment was recently established to garner support for all honors programming, including Honors Institute and Faculty Scholars. For information on how to contribute to the Honors Program Endowment, visit ptkfoundation.org or contact Dr. Nancy L. Rieves, CEO of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation, at 800.946.9995, Ext. 3537, or email nancy.rieves@ptk.org.
Past Phi Theta Kappa International Officers Mia Ramos, Casey Maliszewski and Cassius O. Johnson

There’s a new generation of education leaders on the block, and while they may have started in different places, their paths crossed and their futures changed because of Phi Theta Kappa.

As a new Phi Theta Kappa member at Bevill State Community College in Alabama, Cassius O. Johnson had never been on an airplane before he traveled to his first Phi Theta Kappa Annual Convention, where he was elected International President. New Yorker Mia Ramos was working in a dead-end retail job before she decided to go back to Orange County Community College and run for international office. Casey Maliszewski was a professional ballerina and modern dancer who said attending Raritan Valley Community College in New Jersey and serving as International President of Phi Theta Kappa opened doors to many career options. Today these Phi Theta Kappa leaders are highly-respected professionals living out their dreams in New York City and Washington, D.C.

An education and policy analyst, Johnson joined the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 2012, working on the foundation’s New Designs for K-16 Pathways. Ramos, former International Vice President for Division I of Phi Theta Kappa, currently works as Assistant Director of Programs (New Colleges) for Achieving the Dream, Inc. Maliszewski is a program associate for Achieve, a bipartisan, non-profit organization that helps states prepare young people for postsecondary education, work and citizenship. When asked how they got to where they are today, they say it’s all about completion and connections.

Johnson, who now serves as a Phi Theta Kappa Foundation Trustee, imagined his life if he had not completed college degrees. “Like so many Americans are right now, I would have been struggling to find an on-ramp into the labor market,” Johnson said. “The fact that I stayed in college prevented me from becoming a statistic. My peers the same age haven’t achieved the same success because they haven’t earned a degree.

“Phi Theta Kappa has been promoting completion and persistence from day one. The powerful thing Phi Theta Kappa does is provide peer support to students,” Johnson said. “Expectations are set that you need to continue to hit the mark academically and engage in programs to develop the skills you need in college and the job market.”

Johnson said a recurring theme in his life was “a string of powerful women who saw promise in me and really pushed me.” They include Charlotte Rich, a 12th grade English teacher who taught him to love literature; former Alabama Regional Coordinator Dr. Jo Marshall, now President of Somerset Community College in Kentucky and a Trustee of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation; and Dr. Mindy Stombler, a mentor while Johnson earned his baccalaureate degree at Texas Tech.

“College is not just about academic content — it’s good practice for getting involved in society. Our chapters are impacting real lives — not just the member, but fellow students in terms of completion; and this has an impact on the community,” Johnson said. “Phi Theta Kappa provides a powerful structure for this practice — better than any other organization I have seen.”

“I’m so excited about the completion message — it was so important for me as a student. I like the idea that other students are helping students,” Ramos said. “There are limited resources available to move the needle toward student success, and Phi Theta Kappa members are an untapped resource.

Every day I encounter something that I realize is a blessing because of the educational choices I’ve made,” she added. “I’m happy, safe, motivated and inspired. I wouldn’t have those opportunities if not for education.”

Ramos said she was lucky to have mentors along her educational journey — including her father; Phi Theta Kappa advisor Sandy Wardell; and Phi Theta Kappa Distinguished Alumnus/Foundation Trustee Mirta Ojito, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Columbia University professor. “Success is about maintaining these wonderful connections you make along the way,” Ramos said, crediting her career path to Phi Theta Kappa connections.

Maliszewski said she was fortunate to have supportive parents who advised her to complete her degree, and she also credits mentors Johnson and Ramos for helping her achieve success. While Ramos was an International Officer she encouraged Maliszewski, then serving as a regional officer, to seek an international office herself. “Cassius Johnson helped me find my calling in educational policy,” she said. “Since then, he has become a mentor and friend to whom I always go for advice.” Maliszewski also recalls the valued support she received from former Raritan Valley Community College President Dr. Casey Crabill and Phi Theta Kappa Executive Director and CEO Dr. Rod A. Risley.

Mentoring is so crucial! Not only can mentors help provide you career and life advice, their encouragement can push you to do greater things than you ever thought possible,” Maliszewski said.

Serving as a Phi Theta Kappa International Officer has been called a life-changing leadership experience that develops public speaking, goal setting and organizational skills. For more information on how you can support the International Officer program, contact Dr. Nancy L. Rieves, CEO of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation, at 800.946.9995, Ext. 3537, or email nancy.rieves@ptk.org.

Past International Officers

Forge Careers in Education and Public Policy

Past Phi Theta Kappa International Officers Mia Ramos, Casey Maliszewski and Cassius O. Johnson

The powerful thing Phi Theta Kappa does is provide peer support to students.

— Cassius O. Johnson, past International President

Give online at ptkfoundation.org
“Nothing is more important in higher education than setting goals, and completing your education is the highest goal of all.”

— Billy Wilson, alumnus, chapter advisor and former Phi Theta Kappa Headquarters staff member

Billy Wilson grew up wanting to be a member of Phi Theta Kappa — understandable in a household where his mother, Sally, was the Kappa Alpha Chapter advisor, and his father, Ernest, was Dean at Holmes Community College in Mississippi. First attracted to Phi Theta Kappa by the members’ enjoyment of activities and trips, as he grew up, Billy came to understand what Phi Theta Kappa really meant.

He continues to share that knowledge as the current advisor of the Kappa Alpha Chapter and has filled many other roles in the Society, including member, alumnus, Faculty Scholar, Association of Chapter Advisors officer and Headquarters department director. Billy has acknowledged Phi Theta Kappa’s part in his family’s lives through a planned gift. He and his mother agree on the importance of supporting the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation and consider that support necessary to raise college completion rates.

“Phi Theta Kappa members were always encouraged to complete college,” said Mrs. Wilson. “Before the national effort, this was always stressed, in our chapter and in the international organization. And the scholarships help so much. Phi Theta Kappa members were always strong candidates for scholarships from universities, even before the members-only scholarships were developed. And now, Phi Theta Kappa gives scholarships as well.

“The best thing Phi Theta Kappa does for members is encourage them to keep up their grades, and that’s a first step to student success. And Honors Institutes and Conventions give students a chance to travel and have all kinds of cultural opportunities they might not have at home.”

Together Billy and Sally Wilson have a collective 80 years of Phi Theta Kappa collaborations. Their memories would fill a history book and provide fascinating comparisons between Phi Theta Kappa’s earlier years and the Society we know today.

Mrs. Wilson, now in her 90s, made induction ceremonies a formal occasion — a tradition that has continued — to emphasize the value and responsibilities of membership. Chapter members served as campus tutors and were involved in community service. Whenever possible, members attended regional and national meetings. Mrs. Wilson remembers many nights of manning the concession stands, the chapter’s main fundraiser that helped fund the chapter’s travels. Sometimes she traveled to Phi Theta Kappa events with her friend Dr. Margaret Mosal, Phi Theta Kappa’s first Executive Director. But Mrs. Wilson’s closest Phi Theta Kappa friend was another chapter advisor, Miss Emmie Ellen Wade from Northwest Mississippi Community College, who would become the first Regional Coordinator for Mississippi. Together the two traveled to such landmark events as the first Honors Institute in 1968 and the England Odyssey in 1981. They still visit when possible and talk often, frequently reminiscing about their days as advisors.

Billy Wilson fulfilled his ambition to become a Kappa Alpha member. After graduating from Holmes and Lambuth Colleges, he received his master’s from the University of Memphis and eventually joined the faculty at Meridian Community College in Mississippi, becoming advisor of the Nu Upsilon Chapter in 1973. In 1984, he joined the Phi Theta Kappa Headquarters staff, where he served as Director of Honors Programs for many years.

He initially worked with Dr. Mosal and later with Dr. Rod Risley, the Society’s Executive Director. “Dr. Mosal kept the Society alive during some hard years,” Billy said, “and when Rod became Executive Director, he expanded the existing programs and created new ones. That was a very exciting time to be a part of the staff.”

Billy’s contributions to Phi Theta Kappa have been considerable. He proposed and designed the Five Star Chapter Development Program and created the first Honors Program Committee. He was instrumental in developing many Honors Study Topics, forged the Society’s relationship with the National Collegiate Honors Council, and traveled extensively for Phi Theta Kappa, winning friends for the Society and for himself along the way.

Billy received the Board of Directors Alumni Achievement Award in 2003. He retired from the Headquarters staff in 2004 but not from Phi Theta Kappa. Coming full circle, he returned to teach at Holmes and to serve as Kappa Alpha advisor. Both he and the chapter have received numerous Hallmark Awards, including Most Distinguished Chapter both in 2011 and 2012.

“Nothing is more important in higher education than setting goals, and completing your education is the highest goal of all,” Billy Wilson said. “Phi Theta Kappa gets students excited about learning and achieving and moving on with their education — I have seen that growing up and in visiting chapters and regions. That’s the highest calling an honor society could have.”

Regardless of the size of gifts, contributions pooled together make a great impact. Please consider a gift in support of a program or scholarship that is meaningful to you through a planned gift by contacting Dr. Nancy L. Rieves, CEO of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation, at 800.946.9995, Ext. 3537, or email nancy.riever@ptk.org for information.
Middle States Alumni Continue to Give Back and Help Establish $150,000 Scholarship Endowment

The Middle States Region of Phi Theta Kappa, which includes Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and the District of Columbia, exemplifies longevity, history and continuity — even as it moves forward with bold plans for the future. Building on a distinguished legacy, the region has a new coordinator and an inspired group of alumni who recently helped to establish a $150,000 endowment that will provide scholarships for current members.

In February 2012, the region celebrated its 25th anniversary, and the Middle States Region Alumni Association just commemorated its 10th anniversary. Last year long-time Regional Coordinator Dr. Dan Houghtaling marked his 35th year as a Phi Theta Kappa advisor. Before he retired as Middle States Regional Coordinator, a position held since 1983, he had served longer than any other current coordinator. Dr. Houghtaling was honored at the 2012 Annual Convention with the Regional Coordinator Emeritus Award.

And upon his 2012 retirement, when it was time to pass the reins to a new regional coordinator, there was a great deal of history behind the choice. Newly appointed Middle States Regional Coordinator Pattie Van Atter is no stranger to Phi Theta Kappa — she’s played an active role since being inducted as a member 15 years ago through her involvement in the Middle States Alumni Association and her service on the Alumni Advisory Council.

“Every experience I’ve had has led me to this point. My focus is on the members — it’s always about the members,” she said. “An alum understands that, it’s the spirit of what giving back means. I know how important it is for members to know alumni are there for them.”

According to Van Atter, the first years were critical for the Middle States Alumni Association, as they tried to find their way. She recalled Dr. Houghtaling beginning to give them “jobs” at regional meetings. “He called it ‘empowerment,’” she laughed. As the trust level grew, Van Atter said Dr. Houghtaling asked them to put together a Chapter Officers’ Academy, and the group founded the “Dollars for Scholars” program.

“They’ve contributed a lot — taken our annual programs and really made them quality programs. I started grooming them for their role in the beginning, and they embraced it — took what we had and expanded on it,” Dr. Houghtaling said of the region’s alumni. “With their leadership they took a lot of stress off of the advisors. They became our ‘experts’ based on their career fields, and they are always there if they are needed.”

The region began by giving the Daniel Houghtaling Leaders of Promise Award of $1,000 for a member to complete his or her community college credentials. Then they established a regional alumni transfer scholarship to be used for completion of baccalaureate studies. Recently the region opted to take the $150,000 being held in the treasury for scholarships and create an endowment through the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation. “What the endowment does is make it permanent,” Van Atter explained. “By doing this, we’ll be able to give additional scholarships and hope to give two to three of them at the 2013 Regional Convention — hopefully more after that.”

Michelle Silenzio Franklin, who serves as Vice President of the Middle States Region Alumni Association, said the alumni also host several workshops and programs to inform chapter officers and members about the importance of college completion. She said serving as president of the Rho Upsilon Chapter at Community College of Philadelphia made it possible for her to earn a baccalaureate degree with an All-USA Community College Academic Team scholarship.

“I continue to be involved with the Society to ensure that today’s student leaders can experience the great opportunities and leadership skills that were available to me. There is no greater joy than the feeling you have when you help other students realize their goals and dreams,” Franklin said. “If you are an alumni and now have time to be involved, it is a great opportunity to continue your Phi Theta Kappa experience with the next generation of Phi Theta Kappa students. Your voice may be the one that reaches the one student who no one else can reach.”

The region’s members and alumni faced their toughest hurdle yet in October 2012, when Hurricane Sandy devastated the Middle States and New York Regions. A regional meeting scheduled for early November had to be rescheduled for a later date, but turned into an opportunity to help those recovering from the storm. Renamed the “Regional Meeting and Rally of Support,” in lieu of registration fees participants were asked to donate food, cleaning supplies, toiletries, blankets and other needed items at the event hosted by Raritan Valley Community College. More than 2,000 items were donated, and the region is working on a second collection, hoping to gather another 4,000 additional contributions. “Our region is here to support each

For more information about how alumni can continue their connection with Phi Theta Kappa and for a list of alumni associations in your area, visit ptk.org/alumni. To start an alumni association in your region, contact Courtney Taylor, Annual Giving and Alumni Relations Coordinator, at courtney.taylor@ptk.org or 800.946.9996, Ext. 3677. If you are interested in establishing a regional endowment, contact Dr. Nancy L. Reeves at 800.946.9996, Ext. 3537.

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For more information about how alumni can continue their connection with Phi Theta Kappa and for a list of alumni associations in your area, visit ptk.org/alumni. To start an alumni association in your region, contact Courtney Taylor, Annual Giving and Alumni Relations Coordinator, at courtney.taylor@ptk.org or 800.946.9996, Ext. 3677. If you are interested in establishing a regional endowment, contact Dr. Nancy L. Reeves at 800.946.9996, Ext. 3537.

Give online at ptkfoundation.org

“The region began by giving the Daniel Houghtaling Leaders of Promise Award of $1,000 for a member to complete his or her community college credentials. Then they established a regional alumni transfer scholarship to be used for completion of baccalaureate studies. Recently the region opted to take the $150,000 being held in the treasury for scholarships and create an endowment through the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation. “What the endowment does is make it permanent,” Van Atter explained. “By doing this, we’ll be able to give additional scholarships and hope to give two to three of them at the 2013 Regional Convention — hopefully more after that.”

Michelle Silenzio Franklin, who serves as Vice President of the Middle States Region Alumni Association, said the alumni also host several workshops and programs to inform chapter officers and members about the importance of college completion. She said serving as president of the Rho Upsilon Chapter at Community College of Philadelphia made it possible for her to earn a baccalaureate degree with an All-USA Community College Academic Team scholarship.

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By developing the Oberndorf Lifeline to Completion Scholarship, Lou and Rosemary Oberndorf have provided a tangible way for individuals concerned about completion to contribute.

From St. Louis to New York, community college completion became a national movement in the autumn of 2012. On September 28, St. Louis Community College students gathered under the city’s landmark arch at Kiener Plaza and more than 4,000 signed the pledge to complete. Guests heard about completion in the form of a rap song written by Ryan “Riley B.” Bell, a fellow student who might have dropped out himself if not for encouragement from peers like Phi Theta Kappa member Jeannine Shaffer.

“We are so proud of all of you who have gone out on your campuses and gotten students to commit to complete,” said Shaffer, who serves as president of the Wildwood Campus chapter. “It’s time for the movement to start — commit to complete.”

Chancellor Dr. Myrtle Dorsey challenged the group, “I want to make sure all of you have made the commitment, because you know you don’t sign your name to anything that you don’t believe in. By signing these banners, you have made that commitment.”

Phi Theta Kappa Executive Director and CEO Dr. Rod A. Risley led the energized crowd into a responsive cheer, “The person who is going to get the job is the one with the credentials — WE WILL COMPLETE!”

On October 3, more than 9,120 students pledged to complete their college credentials through a statewide Community College Completion Corps (C4) event held at Finger Lakes Community College in New York.

Thanks to technology, students at 37 State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) community colleges throughout the state were also able to watch the event from their own campuses.

Phi Theta Kappa alumna, author and motivational speaker Isa Adney, inducted as a member at Seminole State College of Florida, gave the keynote address. Her book Community College Success was published in March 2012.

“Students could tell something was going on, something was different — and many students stopped to figure out what it was,” Adney said of her experience participating in the New York event. “I think having an entire state join forces for a completion day is incredibly powerful. The Phi Theta Kappa students did a great job of keeping the motivation level high and encouraging students to complete.”

You can help a student fulfill a commitment to complete through a donation to the Oberndorf Lifeline to Completion Scholarship. Thanks to the generosity of Lou and Rosemary Oberndorf, your gift will be matched one-to-one to help fund a $500,000 endowment that will help provide tuition, books, gas, childcare — whatever is needed for deserving students facing hardships to complete their credentials. Make an online gift at ptkfoundation.org/lifeline-to-completion or contact Karri Chaney, Foundation Programs Specialist, at karri.chaney@ptk.org or 800.946.9995, Ext. 5507.

There was tremendous energy on campus as our faculty and staff came together to encourage students to commit to complete,” said Finger Lakes Community College President Dr. Barbara Risser. “More than 600 students on our campus alone signed the pledge to complete, and now our Phi Theta Kappa members will follow up with those students throughout the year to keep the momentum going.”

A completion video was shown at all of the New York campuses and featured motivational messages from prominent New York community college alumni such as astronaut Eileen Collins, New York State Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb and Neil Giraldo, guitarist for Grammy Award-winning singer Pat Benatar.

Dr. Risley said this was the first statewide C4 event of its kind, and he expects it will serve as a model for events already being planned in other states.

As the C4 effort spreads, corporations are also joining in. Pearson, a company focused on student success through textbooks, e-learning and interactive learning experiences, began partnering with Phi Theta Kappa in 2012, sponsoring the C4 toolkit to plan completion events.

By developing the Oberndorf Lifeline to Completion Scholarship, Lou and Rosemary Oberndorf have provided a tangible way for individuals concerned about completion to contribute.

“The United States, as well as other nations, must get behind efforts to produce more college graduates and persons holding college credentials,” Lou Oberndorf said. “Higher education and business leaders must work together to reverse this downward trend. My wife and I believe in the work of Phi Theta Kappa, which validates student success and does so much to encourage college completion. We are proud to partner with Phi Theta Kappa in creating the Oberndorf Lifeline to Completion Scholarships.”

“We are taking C4 to a whole different level this year. We will be asking faculty for their support to help students complete,” Dr. Risley said, citing statistics that in a few years jobs providing livable wages will require at minimum an associate degree. “A culture of completion must span all corridors of our community colleges. All stakeholders must engage. Our nation’s economic prosperity and democracy are hanging in the balance.”
Angela Ragan, Leaders of Promise scholarship recipient

Phi Theta Kappa Scholarships Lead to College Completion

Phi Theta Kappa member Angela Ragan could be described as the poster child for college completion. She was the first person in her family to graduate from high school, and while she did not immediately go to college, she has made up for any lost time in a big way.

Ragan entered McLennan Community College in Waco, Texas, in January of 2000, graduating with honors in 2002. She transferred to the University of Texas at Arlington, graduating Summa Cum Laude. From there, she enrolled in the master’s program at Western Carolina University.

Ragan is now completing her dissertation for her Doctor of Philosophy degree in American Studies at Emory University. A 2001 Leaders of Promise Scholarship from Phi Theta Kappa started her on her way, Ragan says, helping pay for community college and also giving her the confidence to seek higher educational goals.

As a non-traditional student balancing school, work and her family, which included her husband and teenage children, Ragan credits the support of her Phi Theta Kappa chapter for helping her succeed academically. “When I joined Phi Theta Kappa I found a family, a community of friends interested in learning, serving and encouraging me. Before Phi Theta Kappa I had pretty much been on my own as a student, and suddenly I was part of an energetic group who helped each other and the college and community.” Ragan later served as chapter president.

Phi Theta Kappa’s Leaders of Promise Scholarships, established in 2001, were the Society’s first scholarships to provide financial support for members while they were enrolled in community college. Originally 30 scholarships were offered. Now, the support of the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation and its additional annual gift of $150,000 makes it possible to award 180 scholarships, totaling $180,000 annually.

Ragan was among the first recipients of the Leaders of Promise, which provided financial support and validation that she was succeeding in college and could continue to achieve.

“Being a recipient of the Leaders of Promise Scholarship led me to believe that not only could I succeed at the community college level, but this also gave me the courage to believe that I could continue my academic career. The Leaders of Promise Scholarship gave me the belief in myself and my abilities to not only continue my college education but to become the first in my family to go to graduate school.”

Encouraged by her success as a Leader of Promise, Ragan applied for and received a 2002 Guistwhite Scholarship for baccalaureate studies. Each year 20 Guistwhite Scholars receive $5,000 each, totaling $100,000.

Ragan was one of 20 community college students chosen for the prestigious 2002 All-USA Community College Academic Team from a field of 1,400 nominees throughout the United States. She was recognized by the American Association of Community Colleges, featured in USA TODAY, and given a $2,500 scholarship. “Phi Theta Kappa made this possible — I was able to focus on academics and not the cost of education,” she said.

“I truly believe that had I not received the Leaders of Promise Award I would not have applied for and received the scholarships and awards that followed.”

Ragan originally planned to become a pharmacist; but when she enrolled at McLennan Community College, several factors combined to steer her toward a history major — including outstanding instructors and classes that piqued her interest in Native American heritage.

Ragan describes herself as “Cherokee, Choctaw and Scottish-Irish. My Cherokee heritage made me uncomfortable with some of the pharmacy requirements, and Professor Gilbert Montemayor’s history classes made me want to learn more about the Native Americans and American history.”

When she entered the master’s program at Western Carolina University in North Carolina, Ragan connected with the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation and began a series of interviews with band members who are military veterans. This became the subject of her doctoral dissertation, and her research is continuing through her service as the oral historian and archivist for an American Legion Post in Cherokee.

Back home in Texas, Ragan has come full circle, serving as an adjunct faculty member at McLennan Community College teaching American History. She plans to reconnect with her Phi Theta Kappa chapter, Pi Chi, and hopes members and all students will benefit from her story.

“We still need your support so that the Leaders of Promise Scholarship Endowment can provide financial resources to help deserving Phi Theta Kappa members complete their community college credentials. For information about Leaders of Promise and also scholarships supporting baccalaureate studies, contact Dr. Nancy L. Rieves, CEO of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation, at 800.946.9995, Ext. 3537, or nancy.rievess@ptk.org. Give online at ptkfoundation.org.
Dear Friends,

“Collaborating for Completion,” the theme of this issue of Visionary, showcases the efforts of Phi Theta Kappa’s loyal friends and supporters whose efforts to promote student success are complementing the work of our chapters around the globe. The people and organizations profiled in these pages are speaking for everyone whose generous support of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation has made such a difference in the completion agenda.

As Executive Director and CEO Dr. Rod A. Risley writes, success does require a village — and everyone’s contribution, from a student’s donation at Convention to a Foundation endowment, is deeply appreciated. We are so grateful to all of you for your gifts and your commitment to our mission of validating and further encouraging student success.

One of the most frequently cited reasons for failure to complete college is the financial burden that students face. Senior college tuition rate hikes — which a recent BusinessWeek article estimated as growing 110 percent — have brought the student loan debt to an unprecedented $1 trillion, for the first time exceeding credit card debt.

The Phi Theta Kappa Foundation has responded with a commitment to fund more scholarships to support a student’s drive to complete and succeed. An outstanding example is the Oberndorf Lifeline to Completion Scholarship Challenge. The first Challenge was successful in raising $125,000; and a second Challenge was graciously extended by benefactors Rosemary and Lou Oberndorf. And, because of an additional gift from the Oberndorfs, we are able to award our first Oberndorf Scholarships in 2013!

In this issue you read about other landmark collaborations — Ann and Doug Foard, who are continuing a lifelong dedication to the high calling of teaching; the mother and son team of Sally Wilson and Billy Wilson, instrumental in building the Honors Program; and Tom Christopher and Steve Prityi, who found so much value in their community college experience that they are giving back through their executive roles in the Follett Higher Education Group, which supports the scholarships presented through the All-USA Community College Academic Team.

Our student success is represented by the story of three former International Officers. Cassius O. Johnson, Mia Ramos and Casey Maliszewski are paying it forward through their leadership in nonprofit organizations affiliated with higher education. The story of the collaboration between the Middle States Alumni Association and the Middle States Region shows not only collaboration but the crucial role that alumni can play in supporting two-year chapters.

“Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.” These inspiring words were written many years ago by someone who knew all about collaborating to achieve educational goals — Helen Keller, who was rescued from a life of silent darkness by her teacher Annie Sullivan.

Together we can do so much. We can move an idea forward by working together. We can build together on our past successes to ensure that all deserving students will have the support and resources to complete their education and become productive and engaged contributors to the success of their community, their nation and the world.

Thank you again for your support.

All the best,

Nancy L. Rieves, Ed.D.
Chief Executive Officer
Phi Theta Kappa Foundation
Phi Theta Kappa Financial Highlights

Following are condensed financial statements for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2011 and 2010, derived from our consolidated financial statements audited by HORNE LLP. Copies of our Form 990 and financial statements are available upon request.

Consolidated Statement of Activities
For the Years Ended December 31, 2011 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue, Gains and Other Support</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership fees</td>
<td>5,969,705</td>
<td>5,530,608</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
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<td>1,251,071</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convention and conference fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognition item and textbook sales, net</td>
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<td>1,585,409</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support for scholarships</td>
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<td>Gain (loss) on investments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,132,684</td>
<td>965,631</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue, Gains and Other Support</strong></td>
<td>13,290,674</td>
<td>12,288,180</td>
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</tbody>
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Expenses
Program Services
Convention and conferences | 1,736,390 | 1,693,388 |
Scholarship and programs | 976,630 | 1,025,860 |
Key Services programs | 1,292,104 | 1,134,012 |
Chapter and faculty programs | 1,145,613 | 1,055,884 |
Communication and Publications | 842,542 | 827,979 |
Recognition services | 711,458 | 620,299 |
Other | 2,130,638 | 1,779,624 |
**Total Program Services** | 8,845,773 | 8,136,846 |

Supporting Services
Management and General | 2,317,865 | 2,382,979 |
Fundraising | 57,951 | 28,547 |
**Total Expenses** | 11,221,589 | 10,548,372 |

Change in Net Assets
Net Assets, Beginning of Year | 11,938,133 | 10,188,325 |
Net Assets, End of Year | 14,007,218 | 11,998,144 |

Consolidated Statements of Financial Position
December 31, 2011 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>4,009,991</td>
<td>2,117,464</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Cash Current Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>6,766,800</td>
<td>6,951,911</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property, plant and equipment, net</td>
<td>5,276,826</td>
<td>5,009,641</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>489,464</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td>18,332,261</td>
<td>16,797,884</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities and Net Assets</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current liabilities</td>
<td>1,087,603</td>
<td>908,567</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long term liabilities</td>
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<td>2,920,384</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>4,325,043</td>
<td>3,828,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets</td>
<td>14,007,218</td>
<td>11,968,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>18,332,261</td>
<td>16,797,884</td>
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**2012 Honor Roll of Donors**

The fiscal year 2012 Honor Roll of Donor Giving Societies recognizes the generous annual support of our donors by giving levels. These contributions support programs and services that help shape the lives of current and future Phi Theta Kappa students. We are grateful for all contributions to the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation. These lists include in-kind gifts, gifts of cash, stocks and property as well as gifts given in honor or in memory of an individual.

**Oak Leaf Legacy Society** consists of donors who have chosen to establish a named endowment supporting Phi Theta Kappa. Endowment gifts strengthen the long-term financial security that is required to ensure quality programs and member scholarships year after year.

**Athena Legacy Society** is designed to provide permanent recognition to those individuals who have made the thoughtful decision to leave a gift to the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation in their estate planning, regardless of the amount or the type of fund intended. Planned gifts include bequests, trusts, life insurance and other deferred giving options that allow individuals to support Phi Theta Kappa while making plans beneficial to their individual financial circumstances.

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